



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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District of Arizona*

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PHOENIX FELON SENTENCED TO MORE THAN EIGHT YEARS IN PRISON FOR POSSESSION OF A FIREARM

PHOENIX – On January 9, 2007, Todd Allen Surles, 39, of Phoenix, was sentenced here to 102 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge James E. Teilborg. Surles had pled guilty on August 30, 2006, to the charge of Felon in Possession of a Firearm.

On July 23, 2005, a Honda Accord driven by Surles was stopped by Officers of the Phoenix Police Department for a traffic violation in Phoenix, near 6th Street and Camelback. Officers determined the car to have been reported stolen and found under the front seat a loaded .38 caliber revolver. Police also found illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, a forged driver's license, and stolen checks in the car. With the assistance of Special Agents from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, the firearms portion of the case was submitted for federal prosecution.

Surles has no less than 10 felony convictions from Arizona courts, the first of which he acquired in 1986. His felony convictions include Aggravated Assault, Misconduct with Weapons, Theft, and Possession of Dangerous Drugs for Sale. After serving his federal sentence, Surles will be placed on three years supervised release. Surles' prosecution in federal court is part of the District of Arizona's Project Safe Neighborhoods, an illegal firearms enforcement program.

The effectiveness of Project Safe Neighborhoods in Arizona is based on the ability of federal, state, and local agencies to cooperate in a unified offensive that is led by the U.S. Attorney. Through ongoing partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies, like the one in this case, the U.S. Attorney is implementing a series of strategies that are contoured to fit the specific gun crime problems throughout Arizona.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Phoenix Police Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. The prosecution was handled by Michael Lee, Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-1352-PHX-JAT
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